procurement of an additional 20000 MT by STC.

(d) Does not arise.

Chinese Trade Centre in India

446. PROF. RAM KAPSE:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Chinese Government propose to open a Trade Centre in India;

(b) if so, whether any agreement in this respect has been entered into between the two countries; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHAN HEGDE) (a) Yes, Sir. Mme Li Guo Hua, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Foreign Trade & Economic Cooperation, People's Republic of China during her formal call on the Minister for Commerce in December, 1997 indicated that China intended to open a China Trade Centre in India.

(b) and (c) A Centre having the support of Ministry of Foreign Trade & Economic Cooperation, People's Republic of China is proposed to be opened by M/s. Jiangsu Overseas Enterprises Corporation, Hongkong, which has registered with the Reserve Bank of India to establish a 'China India Trade Investment Promotion Centre' in India. This Centre intends to provide trade and investment facilitation services to Chinese and Indian enterprises.

Policy commitments of World Trade Agreement

447. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a series of comprehensive changes in our policies and practices/systems in terms of our commitment to be honoured at World Trade Agreement and Organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the changes pronounced in Exim Policy;

(c) the details of changes proposed/under consideration for protection for Intellectual Property Rights to create congenial atmosphere for promotion of international trade on sustainable basis; and

(d) by when, the review meeting is to take place and the status of our preparations for the same?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) (a) to (d) India is fully committed to assert its rights and meet its obligations as per the WTO Agreement. India's Trade Policy was reviewed in the WTO on 16-17 April, 1998, where the steps taken by India to liberalise its trade including removal of import restrictions on 340 tariff lines, were explained to WTO Members. India is availing transition period allowed under the TRIPS Agreement to bring its intellectual property rights regime in conformity with its provisions. India actively participates in all discussions in the WTO where Members' rights and obligations are discussed and, if necessary, reviewed.

Export of indigenous goods

448. DR. MOHAN BABU:
SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the items imported by the foreign companies in India on which customs duty has been reduced;

(b) whether as a result thereof the indigenous goods would be available at higher rates than the foreign goods;

(c) whether Government propose to adopt a concrete policy to boost export of indigenous goods; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) (a) and (b) The customs duties have been reduced in successive budgets on a large number of items. There is no separate duty rate for foreign companies in India. Therefore, the question of separate list of items imported by foreign companies on which the duty has been reduced does not arise.

Goods imported into India are liable to pay basic customs duty, countervailing duty and special customs duty. The counter-vailing duty is equivalent to the duty of Central Excise imposed on like goods manufactured or produced in India. In view of this, the imported goods would bear invariably higher rate of duty than similar goods produced in India.

(c) and (d) The export product has to be competitive in the international market and the inputs for such exports products have to be sourced at most competitive prices whether domestically or from any other country.

Customs appraisal for import of goods

449. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a major change in policy with regard to the customs appraisal for import of goods;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to assign companies for the pre-shipment inspection; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to check the misuse of the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHAN HEGDE) (a) to (c) Complaints have been received from time to time about under-valuation and misclassification of imported goods leading to loss of revenue as also undue delays in cargo clearance at the ports and airports. With a view to overcoming these problems, Government have been considering several measures, one of which was the setting up of the Directorate of valuation to disseminate information on international prices and also monitor valuation practices in the Customs formations. One of the suggestions that come up for consideration in this regard was the use of pre-shipment inspection for ensuring correct classification and valuation of imported goods. No decision has been taken in the mattter.

Decline in exports

450. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of growth of export was considerably less than the target fixed for the year 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective steps proposed to be taken to increase the exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHAN HEGDE) (a) As per the provisional data of DGCI&S the rate of growth of export during 1997-98 was 2.64% in dollar terms and 7.5% in rupee terms and is lower than the target set for the year 1997-98.

(b) Export performance is influenced inter-alia by international market conditions, export competitiveness of domestic industry, supporting infrastructure, policy framework etc. During 1997-98 exports were affected due to general slow down in world trade and especially the recession in many countries in South East Asia including Japan, supply side constraints in some sectors and slow erosion of competitiveness.

(c) Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing an export friendly environment, involvement of States in export Promotion and consultation with trade and industry. The Government is according high priority to exports and all necessary steps are being taken to put exports on high growth trajectory.

Anti-dumping Duty on Import of Steel

451. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel manufacturers in the country including SAIL have complained that the import of cheaper hot-rolled coils from South Korea, South Africa and Turkey have cut into their market shares locally and in the export markets and have demanded an anti-dumping duty on import from these countries; and

(b) if so, details thereof and the Government's reaction thereto?

The Minister of Commerce (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes Sir.